



Obligations for Starting a Playgroup

C/2.1.8.5

Church Councils

1. Responsibilities

- 1.1. Church Councils hold specific [obligations](#) where child-related activities are occurring and must comply with the Synod Wide Blue Card Policy.
- 1.2. The Church Council must annually commit to the Safe Church Policy. All Church Council members also have obligations when child-related activities are offered, and must complete Safe Church Training, and annually complete and sign a [Statement of Personal Commitment](#) (SOPC).

Definitions

2. Playgroup

- 2.1. A playgroup is a social and developmental setting where parents, grandparents or caregivers actively participate with their children in a structured program that fosters play, learning, and social interaction among the children. This type of activity typically involves various activities and play experiences designed for children's growth and enjoyment while allowing parents to actively supervise and support their children's participation and includes Mainly Music and other parent supervised activities run for toddlers.

Obligations

3. Legislation and policy

- 3.1. A Playgroup is a child-related activity. Refer to [Blue Card Requirements of Lay Preachers Lay Workers and Volunteers](#) and [Obligations of lay workers \(paid and volunteer\)](#).

4. Parents, grandparents, carers, or guardians

- 4.1. Parents, grandparents, carers, or guardians that attend playgroup with their child, are there as participants only. Therefore they:
 - 4.1.1. Cannot be asked to supervise other children during the activity
 - 4.1.2. Do not require a Blue Card or training.

Safe Spaces

5. Safe welcoming spaces

- 5.1. The suitability of the proposed venue/are for the programs or activities should be assessed before the activity or program commences. Potential risks, such as the safety and maintenance of [playground equipment](#), [fences and safety barriers](#) should be considered, in planning for a safe and successful activity or program with children. Refer to the Workplace Health and Safety [website](#) for more information.
- 5.2. It is important that all activities and programs are approved by the Church Council. Activity approval contributes to the safety of participants, volunteers and leaders and meets the Church's [Insurance](#) requirements. More information about Safe Spaces is available on the Synod [webpage](#).

6. Clear signage

- 6.1. Ensure that adequate signage in the correct language is placed in prominent locations to identify exits and other safety requirements.



- 6.2. Include signage with clear, easy to read information about live streaming or photography if the activity, event, or service is being recorded. Refer to [Guidance Notes: Using Digital Media](#).

Safe Leaders and volunteers

7. Pre-appointment screening

- 7.1. Each part of the application process is to be completed with prayerful consideration of the gifts and skills of the applicant, their suitability to work or volunteer in the role, and the needs of the Church. For information about the recruitment and pre-appointment screening process, refer to [Supporting and Selecting Leaders and Helpers](#).
- 7.2. All volunteers, leaders and coordinators for Playgroup activities and programs must be approved by the Church Council, after undergoing pre-appointment screening. This includes:
 - 7.2.1. An [interview](#) or conversation with the person
 - 7.2.2. [Referee checks](#) with two referees
 - 7.2.2.1. If the person is already a volunteer and is changing roles or adding a new role in volunteering with the playgroup, then a [New Starter Check-In](#) can be used instead of completing another interview and referee process for that volunteer.
 - 7.2.3. Linked valid blue card or exemption card (or apply for a blue card or exemption card online via [Blue Card Services](#))
 - 7.2.4. Complete and sign a [SOPC](#)
 - 7.2.5. Appointment to the role by the Church Council

8. Training

- 8.1. All workers (paid and volunteer) must comply with the [Safe Church Training procedure](#). At least one unit of Safe Church training must have been completed prior to commencing working or volunteering in a Church role.

Safe activities

9. Approval from the Church Council

- 9.1. All activities must be considered and approved by the Church Council. Refer to [Planning Safe Programs](#).
- 9.2. The approval process includes the completion of [Safe Programs Planning Tool](#) (Risk assessment).
- 9.3. The risk assessment must be submitted for all planned activities to the Church Council (or their delegate) and cannot proceed until approved by Church Council.

10. Core values and curriculum

- 10.1. As a foundation to safe ministry, the [Church Council](#) should consider and approve the curriculum to be taught within children and youth ministries to make sure it aligns with the teachings of the Church.
- 10.2. Activities can include a visiting preacher or speaker, from outside of the Uniting Church. Refer to [UCA requirements of visiting speakers and preachers](#) for the process to follow.

11. Safe participation

- 11.1. Some suggestions for rules to promote safe participation have been provided at the end of this document. Alternately, you may prefer to do an activity with participants to create some agreed rules together at the start of your playgroup program.

Safe children and young people

12. Attendance records

- 12.1. Participant attendance [records](#) must be kept. This ensures leaders have a complete list of people on the site which can also be useful if an emergency evacuation occurs.
- 12.2. Attendee [information forms](#) are available for regular attendees or for special events including off-site gatherings.



13. Minimum ratios

- 13.1. Accurately recording attendance ensures [minimum standards](#) are met for ensuring adequate child to adult leader ratios and the number of participants attending an activity is known.
- 13.2. When considering ratios, parents, grandparents, guardians, and carers attending with their child are not considered an adult for ratio purposes as they are not a leader.

Information and support

Information and support can be obtained from the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer on 07 3377 9833 or safechurch@ucaqld.com.au

Most training materials are now available online, using the Synod’s Learning Management System (LMS) [edUCate](#). For information or support to access online training, please contact the Learning & Development Team: 07 3377 9990 or learning@ucaqld.com.au

Revisions

Document number		C/2.1.8.5			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
2.0	16.01.2024	Strategic Risk Manager	16.01.2024	Strategic Risk Manager	Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer
Next scheduled review		01.11.2027			



Five Rules for Safe Participation

1. Always supervise your own child
2. Only feed your own child
3. Only pick up your own child
4. Only take your own child to the toilet
5. Have a great time with your child!